THE CRUEL FAIR.

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY LYRIC.

Thou sent'st to me a heart was crowned;
I took it to be thine,
But when I saw it had a wound
I knew that heart was mine.
A bounty of a strange conceit!
To send mine own to me,
And send it in a worse estate
Than when it came to thee.

The New-York Tribune.

SUNDAY, AUGUSY 20, 1905.

Candid confession is not only good for the soul—it sometimes serves the useful purpose of setting the thoughts of other men on their own besetting sins. Some years ago Mr. G. S. Street concluded a story with these words: "Up stairs was a dead woman on a bed, with what had seemed a smile upon her lips." He thought it a bonny climax then, but he has changed his mind and would not to-day indulge in any such cynical sentimentality as that with which, we gather, the story in question brims over. Why not? Because, as he points out in a diverting little paper on "Sentiment and Feeling," the passage of time makes a difference. "Having had my share of thought and feeling in the interval," he says, "I find the probable emotion of the man in the story too painful to describe and dissect. I can realize it more acutely, and I turn away from it. Then I had no misgiving. It [the dreary motive of the tale] seemed—rather fatuously perhaps—a good idea, and I set myself quite cheerfully to imagine what the man would have felt and to describe it in the best phrases at my command." All honor to Mr. Street for his frank admission of an old mistake! But he goes further and puts his finger on the cause—even more potent than that inexperience—of so much of the foolish gloom in contemporary fiction. "It is polite," he remarks, "but it is not reasonable to assume that all these writers are enthusiasts for art. It is probable, even certain, that in some of them imaginative sympathy is blunt." There's the rub! It is because our depressing writers have no real sympathy for the woes of their puppets that they rob a tragic theme of all its dignity, that they substitute sentimentality for feeling, and make solemn things merely distasteful.

Every auction season in London brings out the same melancholy declaration, "We are being undone by our Transatlantic cousins!" It is too bad, no doubt, but for the life of us we cannot understand why the world's treasures of literature and art should not be preserved, in part, on these shores as well as in England; nor can we see why *our* Transatlantic cousins do not defend their possessions against us by the natural means available. The other day four first folios of Shakespeare's plays were put up at Sotheby's and realized $50,000. They went to an American collector, whereupon a Manchester paper remarks that "the amount spent by the government annually on pictures and other works of art is as nothing when compared with the unlimited purses of American millionaires, and it is therefore evident that the only course that remains open, if private literary and art treasures are to be retained in this country, is legislation." To which one feels inclined to retort, "Fiddlesticks!" The action of the Italian Government is quoted in support of the argument, but no comparison is possible between the two countries. Vast fortunes are practically unknown in Italy, but Great Britain abounds in wealthy land owners, brewers, manufacturers, financiers and South African and other millionaires.

It is amusing to watch Mr. Swinburne's critical countrymen at the thorny task of appraising "Love's Cross Currents" with justice, and at the same time with a proper sense of the respect due to his rank as a poet and a veteran. Some of them succeed, but others "slop over." The reviewer of "The Athenæum" is wonderful on the subject. Mr. Watts-Dunton, to whom the book is dedicated, retired from that journal not long ago, but he left behind him equally pious upholders of the Swinburnian tradition. Is the resurrection of the "buried bantling" deprecated? Then, says he, you have merely to observe that it was not buried in manuscript, but in "The Tatler," and therefore "the question comes to an end." Have we any critical doubts? "With regard to the merits or demerits of the book, any critic who should say that its literary quality is not of a high order ought at once to abandon his profession." "Off with his head!" said the Queen. But there are still more brilliant gems in this prodigious review, which, by the way, has the place of honor and runs to inordinate length. Do we still resist the letters out of which the book is made? "Lady Midhurst's letters alone," thunders the pontiff, "ought to be cherished by the busy connoisseurs who ransack two hemispheres for lost Lambs." Obviously all that is needed to make the eulogy complete is the customary allusion to Mr. Watts-Dunton, his genius, and, of course, it is made. Citing one of Byron's "finest things" to show the power of an epistolary touch in a narrative, the critic adds that "perhaps a not less striking proof * * * is to be found in Mr. Watts-Dunton's lyrical drama, 'The Coming of Love.'"

Bravo!

JOHN OF GAUNT.

A Good Biography of "Time Honored Lancaster."

JOHN OF GAUNT, KING OF CASTILE AND LEON, DUKE OF AQUITAINE AND LANCASTER, EARL OF DERBY, LINCOLN AND LEICESTER, SENESCHAL OF ENGLAND. By Sydney Armitage-Smith. Illustrated. 8vo, pp. xxviii, 499. Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Old John of Gaunt, time honored Lancaster," has filled a large space in song and story, but never till now has this descendant of kings and progenitor of many monarchs enjoyed the distinction of a separate biography. He has had, however, the inestimable advantage of a name uniquely descriptive and therefore not to be forgotten. A good nickname is a valuable trade mark. Ghent, the modern English form of the name of his birthplace, would be commonplace in comparison, a mere bald geographical expression. But Gaunt; how vastly more effective, how suggestive of the grim personality of the bearer! By his name alone he stands out distinct, individual and memorable. And so, as he was son of Edward III, who ruled England for fifty years; father of Henry IV, who changed the dynasty, and forbear of other Edwards, of Richard III, of the first Tudor King, not to speak of Isabella, the friend of Columbus; of Prince Henry the Navigator and numberless princes and potentates of Spain and Portugal, there is abundant material, contemporary and posthumous, from which to construct the biography for which he has waited for these five hundred years!

JOHN OF GAUNT.
(From the window in All Souls' College, Oxford.)

Born in 1340, John of Gaunt was a product of the age of chivalry, and his life was spent before the great awakening of the Renaissance struck the fetters from the intellectual life of Europe. Of vast possessions and ambitions, though his natural position was enhanced by fortunate marriages, even his first biographer, while finding him profoundly interesting, cannot pronounce him a hero. "The great feudatory, with princely wealth and imposing retinue, appears now as the patron of letters, now as a knight errant in search of adventures, now as a general—usually unfortunate—now as the pretender aspiring to a throne. Military fame eludes him; the laurels of victory wither at his touch; royal dignity escapes him; the crown and sceptre are beyond his reach. He stands by the steps of two thrones; he cannot mount to either." It is an impressive summary, and the author has spared no pains to sift and weigh the great amount of historical evidence at his disposal in order to construct a living portrait of his subject. He labors under no illusions. He is cold, patient, analytical. It is hard to arouse a high degree of enthusiasm for one who was among the most unpopular figures of his own day; but any effort of the writer to invest his subject with a halo of fictitious interest, to deck it out with some of the gorgeous color of a splendid age, could not fail to be attended by departure from the highest standard of rigid impartiality. In effect, then, we have a chronicle in which the sequence of proved facts counts for more than a vivid picture of the times. In the strict detail of happenings we miss the broad sweep of generalization, the ripe allusion, the pregnant comparison, the illuminating moral, but we have a consecutive story well fortified by authorities.

The Duke of Lancaster is presented as the foremost of the great feudatories, with the solid basis of territorial possessions for his influence, but little real statesmanship or capacity for managing men. He was a representative of the prevailing idea that the ruling caste was superior to human laws; he was naturally indifferent to public opinion at a time when the public hardly knew it had an opinion; he favored prerogative as against liberty, and in general was ready to defend with life and power the reactionary view. By a singular combination of events he became the patron and supporter of John Wycliffe, the reformer; not that he had any interest in reform; far from it; but he needed a tool in his fight against the ecclesiastical aggressions that threatened those of the royal house. The Bishop of Winchester, the renowned founder of Winchester College, perhaps England's greatest public school to-day, and of New College, Oxford, was the particular object of his attack. Says Mr. Armitage-Smith:

> William of Wykeham had risen from obscurity to such a position at the court that Froissart records with astonishment that without the advice of this single priest nothing of importance was done in England. Such preferment the Bishop owed to his own administrative capacity and to royal favor. That the power of the great feudatories should be equalled by that of an official hierarchy was bad enough: that this power, created by royal favor, should be used to oppose the King's government and criticise the King's ministers was intolerable. So argued the Duke of Lancaster, regarding the Bishop's part in the opposition as a double treason to his sovereign and to his benefactor. So must be explained, but not excused, the treatment accorded by the duke to the great Minister, whose services to his sovereign, however considerable, were surpassed by those services to the cause of learning to which his two noble foundations have erected an imperishable monument.
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> The duke's vengeance was thorough. He chose two weapons to attack his enemy. The first was a charge of malversation, difficult to prove, impossible to disprove, and certain to carry conviction with those who were anxious to be convinced. It is needless to examine the charges in detail. Probably Lord Latimer was innocent of several of the counts of the indictment upon which he was condemned; certainly the accusations launched against William of Wykeham were merely the expression of political hatred.
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> The Bishop was condemned to lose his temporalities, which were granted to Prince Richard, and he himself was forbidden to come within twenty miles of the court.
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> The second mode of attack was more subtle in conception, more far reaching in effect. William of Wykeham did not stand alone. He was one of the class of political bishops with whom on more occasions than one the court had come into conflict in the past, and with whom there were to be bitter feuds in the future.
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> John of Gaunt, who had a habit of discovering interesting people, had met at Bruges a year before a certain priest, John Wycliffe, who had formed decided views about priests who neglected the cure of souls for the care of castles, devoting to the secular service of the state lives consecrated to the service of religion.
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> John Wycliffe, born near Richmond, in Yorkshire (until 1372 a Lancastrian honor), and connected with a family one member of which at least was known to the duke, had made an impression on the man who had discernment enough to see much merit in Geoffrey Chaucer and none in Walter of Peterborough. There were other views besides those in question, which Wycliffe held and published, but in order to secure co-operation on the lines of a particular policy it is not necessary to sympathize with a man's whole scheme of thought.
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> Two months after the close of the "Good" Parliament a courier was riding from Westminster to Oxford, with a summons to Wycliffe to appear in London before the King's Council, and for the next six months, by the mandate and under the protection of the Duke of Lancaster, the reformer was busied in exposing, with all the power of his moral earnestness and unrivalled dialectic, the abuses and evils of a corrupt church. Such was the answer of the Duke of Lancaster to clerical zealots for administrative reform, and so ended one of the most deeply interesting episodes in the political history of England.

The man whom Lancaster needed and used he had the grace to defend when later the reformer was brought to book for his open denunciations of ecclesiastical corruption, and the author almost loses the labored poise of the balanced historian as he depicts the exciting and well attested scene of the trial. Going further he shows the duke as the vender of indulgences, as the patron and protector of friars and the orders, heaping wealth and favors upon them, and only objecting to the extension of their worldly power when it took a political turn and threatened privileges in which he was interested. But it is as the friend and patron of Chaucer that Lancaster is presented in the most favorable light. He gave throughout life a consistent support to the poet, and amply has it been repaid. One could wish that this side of his character had received fuller treatment at the hands of his biographer.

A study of the Middle Ages is of necessity largely concerned with dynastic problems and disputes, for, as our author aptly says, the nations had not yet learned to fight for religions or for markets. They fought for the hereditary rights of their sovereigns. John of Gaunt took a leading share in those battles. A powerful factor of government during much of the minority of his nephew, Richard II, he was near enough the throne in a time of great disturbance to arouse suspicions of his loyalty, while for a period of many years he was the avowed pretender to the throne of Castile. In pursuit of this will-of-the-wisp he spent years of his life and wasted the prestige of his country. Upon this point, the keynote to his character, according to his biographer, John of Gaunt never realized the hopelessness of his position. "The fundamental folly of the Plantagenet claim to France and of the Lancastrian claim to Castile was the same—the attempt to force an alien dynasty on high spirited people, keenly sensible of their national honor." As this long cherished hope had to be relinquished, so, too, John of Gaunt saw the beginning of the end of English rule in Aquitaine. It is the testimony of a contemporary that the chief grievance of the Gascons was the monopoly of official positions by Englishmen—a peculiarly persistent trait of the dominant race, as the Belgians found in 1830 and the Norwegians more recently.

This work bears every evidence of careful and painstaking research, and while removing from a great figure the reproach of having no biographer will take its place as a valuable contribution to the history of a highly interesting epoch.

THE PICTURE POSTCARD.

Its Amazing Developments.

From The London Telegraph.

Figures only to be described as staggering are dealt with in a return that has just been issued by the Postal Union for the year 1903, and the mind fails to realize what is contained in the statement that in that period of twelve months 2,597,000,000 letters were posted in Great Britain. The correspondence of all other countries is, of course, tabulated, and in regard to postcards Germany heads the list with 1,161,000,000, to be followed by the United States with 770,500,000 of such missives, this country taking the third place with 613,000,000. That, however, is a sufficiently striking total, and is a good evidence of the popularity of the picture card, which, of course, has been a largely contributing factor to the vast mass. Japan, it is interesting to note, has the fourth place in the world's employment of postcards, and used about 487,500,000 during the same time.

With aggregates so stupendous as these it is obvious that the picture postcard is an item of no little importance, alike from the point of view of the national revenue and of commerce. It was known and employed in Germany about twenty years ago, but it is only twelve years since that any serious effort was made to bring it into vogue here. Some four years of persistent endeavor with the postoffice were required before it was sanctioned, but on November 1, 1898, restrictions were removed, and it could be sent. But the earliest had, of course, to conform to the regulation size, which was square, and the pictorial embellishment had to leave at the back any space that was desired for writing. The next great stride forward was to its present dimensions, with the concession of half of the front for written communication, thus leaving all the back for artistic treatment. Since then its progress has been uninterrupted and is steadily continuing.

THE GREEN ROSE.

Canon Ellacombe, in The Cornhill Magazine.

I am bound to say that this rose meets with very little admiration; the general verdict is, "More curious than beautiful." But I like the rose, and even admire it; and to botanists it is extremely valuable, because it is one of the best proofs we have that all parts of a plant above the root are modifications of the same thing, and in the green rose every part may be called a leaf. It is a variety of the common China rose, came to England about 1835, and is quite constant. It also gives a strong support to the view held by many great botanists that all flowers were originally green, and that the colors in flowers are analogous to the autumn tints of leaves, and in the green rose the flowers generally put on a reddish tint when they begin to fade. In this view, the green rose, as we now have it, is a reversion to an older state of the rose, or, it may be, a continuance of an undeveloped rose.

The official biography of Cardinal Newman was to have been written by his literary executor, the late Father Neville, but years went by without any serious start being made. Mr. Wilfrid Ward, who has undertaken to do the work, is qualified to make a good book on the subject without much delay, but, as a matter of fact, he is going to take his time, and it is expected that he will not publish for three or four years.